

In the Claims:

- A. **Kindly cancel non-elected Claim 20, without prejudice.**
- B. **Kindly amend Claims 1, 3, 7, 12, 13, and 15, as follows. No new matter has been introduced.**
 - 1. **(Amended)** A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, having a nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack, comprising:
 - initiating formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack by:
 - depositing a first ultra-thin nitride film on a semiconductor substrate, wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;
 - depositing a high-k material on the first ultra-thin nitride film; and
 - depositing a second ultra-thin nitride film on the high-k material, thereby forming a sandwich structure, wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film is deposited using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;
 - completing formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack from the sandwich structure; and
 - completing fabrication of the device.
 - 3. **(Amended)** A method as recited in claim 1,
wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film comprises silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), and
wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film has a thickness in a range of 1 to 2 atomic layer(s).
 - 7. **(Amended)** A method as recited in claim 1,
wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film comprises silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), and
wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film has a thickness in a range of 1 to 2 atomic layer(s).

12. **(Amended)** A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, having a nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack, comprising:
initiating formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack by:
depositing a first ultra-thin nitride film on a semiconductor substrate,
5 wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique, and
wherein the substrate comprises a silicon wafer or a silicon-on-insulator (SOI) wafer;
depositing a high-k material on the first ultra-thin nitride film; and
10 depositing a second ultra-thin nitride film on the high-k material, thereby forming a sandwich structure, wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film is deposited by using an atomic layer deposition (ALD) technique;
completing formation of the nitride/high-k material/nitride gate dielectric stack from the sandwich structure; and
completing fabrication of the device.

13. **(Amended)** A method as recited in claim 12,
wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film comprises silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), and
wherein the first ultra-thin nitride film has a thickness in a range of 1 to 2 atomic layer(s).

15. **(Amended)** A method as recited in claim 14,
wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film comprises silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), and
wherein the second ultra-thin nitride film has a thickness in a range of 1 to 2 atomic layer(s).